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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A watercraft comprising:

an engine having at least one air intake regulator being movable through a first range of opening positions from an idle position to a fully open position;

an engine speed control operator remotely positioned relative to the engine and coupled to the air intake regulator, the engine speed control operator being movable between a first position and a second position; and

an engine control system comprising a controller coupled to the air intake regulator to at least selectively control the air intake regulator, the controller configured to provide a first mode of engine operation, in which movement of the engine speed control operator between the first and second positions causes the air intake regulator to move through the first range of opening positions from the idle position to the fully open position, respectively, and at least a second mode of engine operation, in which movement of the engine speed control operator between the first and second positions caused the air intake regulator to move through a second range of opening positions, the second range of opening positions being less than the first range of opening positions, and an engine modality selector in communication with a controller, the modality selector being selectable between at least two states corresponding to the at least two modes of engine operation provided by the controller, the modality selector configured to output a modality signal to the controller that is indicative of a desired mode of engine operation and the controller configured to control the engine in response to the modality signal.

2. The watercraft of Claim 1, wherein the second range of opening positions includes the idle position.

3. The watercraft of Claim 1, wherein the air intake regulator is a throttle valve.

4. The watercraft of Claim 1, wherein the controller is configured to control the maximum opening position of the air intake regulator.

5. The watercraft of Claim 1, wherein the engine speed control operator is a lever mounted on a handlebar of the watercraft.

6. The watercraft of Claim 1, wherein the engine speed control operator is coupled to the air intake regulator by a cable.

7. The watercraft of Claim 6, wherein the engine control system additionally comprises a variable displacement mechanism to vary the ratio of the cable displacement to the engine speed control displacement depending upon the state of the modality selector.

8. The watercraft of Claim 1, wherein the controller is coupled to the air intake regulator through an actuator to control the air intake regulator under at least the first and second modes of engine operation.

9. The watercraft of Claim 1, wherein the modality selector is mounted to a handlebar of the watercraft.

10. A watercraft comprising:

- an internal combustion engine;

- a jet propulsion unit driven by the internal combustion engine;

- an engine output control system to restrict the quantity of air that is taken in by the engine; and

- a switching means for switching the engine output control between an air-restricting state, and an unrestricting state;

- whereby the maximum output of the engine is limited when the engine output control is in the air-restricting state.

11. The watercraft of Claim 10, wherein said switching means is mounted to a handlebar of the watercraft.

12. The watercraft of Claim 10, further comprising a throttle valve disposed within the internal combustion engine that has an opening degree movable through an idle position and a fully open position, and wherein the engine control system closes the throttle valve to restrict the amount of air taken in by the engine.

13. The watercraft of Claim 12, further comprising an electronically driven actuator coupled to the engine control system to control the throttle valve opening degree.

14. The watercraft of Claim 12, wherein the throttle valve opening degree is controlled by a throttle cable actuated by a throttle lever and a variable displacement mechanism controls the displacement stroke of the throttle cable so that when the engine output control is in the air-restricting state, a maximum displacement of the throttle lever results in only a partial displacement of the throttle valve.

15. A method for controlling the air intake of an internal combustion engine between at least first and second operation modes, the engine having an air intake regulator operable through a first range of motion corresponding with a first range of motion of a remote actuator when in the first operation mode, the method comprising:

detecting a change in a desired operation mode from the first operating mode to the second operating mode; and

varying the range of motion of the air intake regulator such that the air intake regulator is operable between a second range of motion that is less than the first range of motion.

16. The method of Claim 15, further comprising sensing a change in the desired operation mode from a first operation mode to a second operation mode and sending a corresponding signal to an electronic control unit.

17. The method of Claim 16, further comprising controlling an electrical actuator to vary the range of motion of the air intake regulator such that it is operable between a second range of motion that is less than the first range of motion.

18. The method of Claim 15, further comprising associating the first range of motion of the remote actuator with the second range of motion of the air intake regulator.